

Minutes: MA Food Policy Council

May 4, 2018: 9:30 – 12:30

Campus Center, University of Massachusetts, One Campus Center Way, Amherst, Room 174 (first floor)

In attendance:

Helena Fruscio Altsman , designee, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development EOHEd

Denise Courtney, designee, EOESE

Representative Hannah Kane

Amanda Kinchla, Food safety

Representative Steve Kulik

John Lee, Farmer

Commissioner John Lebeaux, Dept. of Ag Resources Commissioner

Commissioner McCue, Dept. of Transitional Assistance

Lea Susan Ojamaa, Dept. of Public Health

Mark Reil, Senator Fattman's Office

Eric Stocker, Distribution

Sam Wong, Local Boards of Health

Call to Order at 9:45 by Commissioner Lebeaux

This meeting was hosted by UMASS Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment/Extension

Welcome, John Lopes, Associate Dean, College of Natural Sciences at UMASS Amherst. UMASS is very committed to agriculture and food, something that is part of our daily lives. UMASS is number one in the US for the quality of the food in their dining services with an eye on sustainability.

Council members and attendees introduced themselves.

Acceptance of Minutes: A motion was made by Rep. Kulk, seconded by Rep. Kane and passed unanimously.

Officers Reports

Commissioner Lebeaux

The January meeting included a planning meeting discussion. At an upcoming meeting, we will review the outcomes for how those outcomes can impact future programming.

Commissioner Lebeaux introduced Shani Fletcher, a new MA Food Policy Council Intern, currently a student at the Tufts Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning Department, who will be writing a White Paper on education as it connects to the MA Local Food Action Plan.

The MA FPC White Paper draft on regulatory issues paper is on hold and a plan is being developed for next steps.

Old Business - HIP update: Commissioner Jeff McCue. The program was suspended April 16th. Not at odds is the HIP funding at \$2.5 M in the HIP Supplemental budget, to be able to turn HIP back on. FY 19

picture: The Governor's budget included \$1.3M for HIP, The House budget ended up with a reported amount of \$4 M. Members of the Council helped move that number from \$3.5 M. The Senate budget comes out on May 10. There has been active work with foundations, funder groups and the MA Food System Collaborative. There will be a funders briefing on June 28. Save the date postcards are coming out to target funders to secure funding moving forward. There is a broad circulation plan but please help promote the effort. The Council can be of assistance. Rep. Kulik's office will send a copy of the letter of support that went out for this program, on behalf of the Council.

Representative Hannah Kane: What's the communication plan for recipients and farmers (retailers) and we would work with our mobile app and our portals and target those who have already been using the benefit? What are some broader messages that can be sent through the network including community partners? A little over five percent of the DPH caseload is engaged in this program. The first focus will be those who have been involved. Please share with the Legislators immediately and we'll help to get the work out that it's back on. Representative Kulik thanked Representative Kane for her leadership and advocacy for the program and her forceful and effective work.

Program: Food Systems Literacy, Education and Future Farmers and food system workers

Education focus from MA Local Food Action Plan goal: *Support expanded educational opportunities for farmers and other food system workers. The current focus is to support Massachusetts higher education, UMass Extension, and vocational technical schools by developing and offering appropriate curricula to meet food system needs.* **Background:** *Education Part I, MA Food Policy Council meeting September 15, 2017: The Council discussed ways to engage and provide economic support for new farmers. Topics included how to improve education for food processing jobs, and how to direct students toward agricultural and food science careers. A panel from UMass Extension discussed their current programming. They also considered program improvement to better meet goals identified in the Food Plan, a potential challenge with current resources. A representative from the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Schools, and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance also shared recommendations. In this meeting, **Education Part II will take advantage of educational partner in western MA, since the meeting is being held in Amherst.***

"Food systems literacy, education, future farmers and food system workers." Rather than focusing narrowly on career preparation for farmers, this program will focus on education for food and farming literacy that students can get through these specific kinds of programs that will prepare them for a variety of roles in the for-profit and non-profit food systems world.

Joe Shoenfeld, Associate Director, UMass Amherst Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, provided background on the theme and introduced speakers. How different educational efforts contribute to this was the focus of presenters.

- Sarah Berquist, Lecturer and Advisor, UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture, the Sustainable Food and Farming Program
- Amanda Brown, Director, UMass Student Farming Enterprise Program
- Catherine Sands, Lecturer in UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture: educating for food justice
- Lisa DePiano, Stockbridge School Carbon Farming Initiative and permaculture
- Angela Roell and Mary Bell, Lecturers, UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture: project based learning in food recovery

- Gardening in the Community (GTC) : Liz Wills-O'Gilvie, chair of the GTC board and Chair of the Steering Committee of the Springfield Food Policy Council
- Kyle Bostrom, Agricultural Mechanics, and Bethany Wilson, Animal Science Instructor and FFA Advisor, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, Northampton
- Abrah Dresdale, Educator, Facilitator, & Consultant, Greenfield Community College: Franklin County House of Corrections program, College Social Permaculture & Food Justice (NE Prison Gardens Education Retreat program)
- Thomas M. Waskiewicz, Western Mass. Regional 4-H Educator, UMass Extension and Carrie Chickering-Sears, Director of Community Education in Animal Agriculture, UMass Extension: engaging youth in agriculture (4-H is one of the largest afterschool programs in the Commonwealth) (Dairy Ambassador Program is one of the first in the US)
- Rochelle Bellin, Associate Director, Just Roots, Greenfield: Advancing food systems literacy on a community farm (Education is the heart of what we do...)

New Business

MA Collaborative Update, Winton Pitcoff, Executive Director. One of the accomplishments of the FPC has been to make more people aware of HIP and there have been several Council champions. From the House version of the budget, increase in conservation tax credit, dairy tax credit increase, and MA Farm to School and other programs there are good signs of progress for the food system in the budget.

There was a gathering of FPCs from around the state with a focus on opportunities to collaborate. There will be another meeting in September. There's a wide range of Council's in the state. There is a working group on farming and public health. One of the focuses is giving farmers more say with local boards of health. Certification for farmers that sell at farmers market so that it's easier to deal with multiple boards of health and some sort of standardization like CQP for a certificate that could be given to BOHs is also under discussion.

Public Comment

The Farm Bill is in a critical moment right now with the possibility of SNAP being cut dramatically. What is the Council doing about it? The Council can't take an official position but individual members can. DTA has been very active through the Governor's DC office and Congressman McGovern re: challenges to eligibility. Most folks in Massachusetts are highly concerned with the rough draft in the house even though it's very early in the progress. It will be monitored and many groups have offered many public comments. Case studies and stories are very effective to share with legislators.

It's highly appropriate for the Council to promote this topic. DTA has data about the number of people that could be affected with these changes. This can be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Would it be helpful to reengage the Council's Advisory Committee to see what other organizations in the state are doing? There are some regulations being considered that could provide a great detriment to our programs.

Announcements

July 19, 2018, 9:30 – 12:30 (Thursday) MA Food Policy Council Meeting, Richard Cronin Building of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Room 108, Westborough

Adjournment: A motion was made by John Lee, seconded by Representative Kulik and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.